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ABSTRACT

The nature and extent of errors in the oral language of pupils in elementary and secondary school years was investigated. One hundred and eighty subjects were selected from public schools and were administered the Experimental Form B of the new Gray Oral Reading Test. Obtained data were analyzed with descriptive techniques and tests of statistical significance. It was found that (1) oral reading errors that decreased as grade level increases were repetition, no response, and inversion; (2) errors that increased as grade level increases were partial mispronunciation and gross mispronunciation; (3) errors that persisted throughout the grades were substitution, omission, and insertion; and (4) errors that appear in the same proportionate frequency whether pupil read passages of difficulty below or above their own level were substitution, insertion, and no response. Three other observations were that (1) chronological maturity accompanies reduction in total oral reading errors, (2) sex differences are negligible in this study, and (3) the reduction rate of total oral reading errors is rapid during the primary grades and slower and irregular through the secondary levels. (AW)

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## SUMMARY

Title: Patterns of Change in Oral Reading Errors from Primary through Secondary Levels

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Purpose: The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature and extent of errors in the oral reading of pupils in the elementary and secondary school years. More specifically, the study sought to identify the kinds of errors that occur at different levels and changes in types of error from grade to grade.

Based on previous research the following hypotheses were formulated and tested.

Hypothesis I: The incidence of certain oral reading errors will decrease gradually as pupils' grade levels increase throughout the elementary and secondary schools. Specifically,

A. The error, "Inversion," gradually will disappear in the oral reading of pupils beyond third grade.

B. The difficulty, "No Response," will disappear.

Hypothesis II: The incidence of oral reading errors will increase gradually as pupils' grade levels increase throughout the elementary and secondary schools. Specifically,

A. The incidence of "Omission," will increase gradually in the oral reading of pupils beyong ninth grade.

B. The incidence of "Repetition," will increase gradually, as stated above.

Hypothesis III: The incidence of certain oral reading errors will persist throughout the elementary and secondary schools. Specifically,

A. "Partial Mispronunciation," errors will persist.

B. "Gross Mispronunciation," errors will persist.

C. "Substitution" errors will persist.

D. "Insertion" errors will persist.

Hypothesis IV: There will be no difference in the prevailing types of errors common to each grade (II through XII) whether the pupils are reading series of passages of levels of difficulty below or above their own grade.

Procedures: In order to achieve the purpose of the study, three steps were taken: 1) selection of the subjects, 2) administration of the tests, and 3) analysis


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of the data.

1) Subjects: The 180 subjects of the study were selected from public elementary and secondary schools in Chicago in culturally stable middle class neighborhoods. Fifteen boys and fifteen girls were randomly selected from each of the even numbered grades II through XII.

2) Test. The extent to which eight common oral reading errors occurred was measured by Experimental Form B of the new Gray Oral Reading Tests. The test consists of thirteen passages arranged in order of difficulty for grades I to XVI. Questions about passage content were asked, not to test comprehension as such, but to assure the examiner that some attention was being given to the sense of the passage. (Dr. W. S. Gray, whom the writer assisted in the revision of this test designed it primarily as a measure of oral reading fluency and accuracy. It was designed as a useful and economic diagnostic instrument. It was to be supplemented by "in depth" check lists which would further analyze the relationship of grammatical meanings and the positions of letters and words mispronounced.)

3) Analysis of Data: The data were analyzed with (1) descriptive techniques and (2) tests of statistical significance. First, a descriptive analysis was made of the eight types of oral reading errors. Data of the following sorts were reported: (1) the total number of passages attempted by each subject, (2) the average number of errors per passage for each grade, (3) the ordered per cent of oral reading errors for passages at, below and above each grade level. The second phase of the analysis was to verify and sharpen the findings of the first phase. The Chi-Square technique was employed to determine the probability that the distribution of errors by grade levels was due to chance. Product moment correlation coefficients were calculated to estimate the strength of established relationships, and regression coefficients provided a measure of the rate of increase or decrease of a given type of error.

Results and Conclusions: The findings showed that half of the sub-hypotheses based on conflicting previous research were rejected. Instead, the eight major oral reading errors studied followed these patterns of change:

I. Oral reading errors that decrease as grade levels increase:

A. repetition
B. no response
C. inversion (it was so infrequent it could not be tested)

II. Errors that <u>increase</u> as grade levels increase

A. partial mispronunciations
B. gross mispronunciations

III. Errors that persist throughout the grades

A. substitution
B. omission
C. insertion

Only three errors appear in the same proportionate frequency whether pupils read passages of difficulty below or above their own level.

A. substitution
B. insertion
C. no response

Three other observations are:

1. Chronological maturity accompanies reduction in total oral reading errors.
2. Sex differences are negligible in this study.
3. The reduction rate of the total oral reading errors is rapid during the primary grades, and slower and irregular through the secondary levels.